

THE
Ancient Christians'
PRINCIPLE or RULE of LIFE,
Revived and brought to Light:

WITH
A Description of True Godliness,
AND
The Way by which we may conform
our Lives thereunto.

ALSO,
Some Extracts from the Writings of the late
JUDGE HALE.

NORTH SHIELDS,
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ANCIENT CHRISTIANS

PRINCIPLES OF RULE OF LIFE

AND A HISTORY OF LIGHT

WITH

A DESCRIPTION OF THE GODLINESS

AND

THE WAY BY WHICH WE MAY COME



TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

JUDGEL HALL

NORTH BRIDGE

THE END OF THE WORLD

1795

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THE following Extracts from a small Treatise, entitled, "The Grounds of a Holy Life, and from the Writings of Judge Hale, &c." are recommended to the serious Perusal of the Professors of Christianity of every Denomination; who may thereby in some measure be enabled to distinguish whether they are coming up in the vital and essential Part of True Religion, or too much resting in an outward Profession of Godliness: a Point of the utmost Importance for all to be acquainted with; as without the former no Profession will avail to the Cleansing of the Soul from Sin and preparing it for an Inheritance in that Kingdom, where no Doubt, all desire to find an Admission at last.

O! that Christendom (at present unhappily divided into Sects and Parties) would submit to the Governance of the Light, Spirit or Grace of God, Superstition

stition and Bigotry would then give place to Beneficence and Charity; Truth speaking, supersede Swearing, so expressly and particularly forbid by Our Blessed Lord, and being redeemed out of the Spirit from which contention Arises, into the Peaceable Spirit of Christianity, we should "Beat our Swords into Plow-shares, our Spears into Pruning-hooks and learn War no more." O! Blessed Day! may the Almighty hasten its coming.

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T H E
Ancient Christians'

PRINCIPLE or RULE of LIFE,

Revived and brought to Light.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
writing to Titus, had this say-
ing.

“ The Grace of God that bring-
“ eth salvation hath appeared unto
“ all men, teaching us, that denying
“ ungodliness and worldly lusts, we
“ should live soberly, righteously,
“ and godly in this present world.”

From which weighty sayings these
following questions arise.

I.

What is the Grace of God?

The Grace of God that bringeth
salvation, is no less than a divine in-
spiration, the Gift of God to the sons
and

and daughters of men, and Adversary to the Devil, a Destroyer of sin, and the only Saviour of Mankind therefrom. *

II.

Where doth the Grace of God, that bringeth salvation, appear?

The great God, in his infinite wisdom and everlasting love, hath placed this seed in the hearts of the sons of men, there the Grace of God, that bringeth salvation, may be found, from thence (until it come to be veiled by clouds of iniquity) it shews itself

* Grace is the free and eternal love and favour of God, which is the spring and source of all the benefits we receive from him. This free and unmerited love of God is the original mover in our salvation, and hath no cause above it to excite or draw it forth, but merely arises from his own will. It was this mercy or love of God that found out redemption for mankind. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for us," *John* iii. 16. Grace is the work of the Spirit, renewing the soul after the image of God, and continually guiding and strengthening the believer to obey his will, to resist and mortify sin, and to overcome it. "My Grace is sufficient for thee" 2 *Cor.* xii. 9

Cruden's Concordance.

a witness against all unrighteousness and ungodliness.

As every evil motion and temptation that leads to sin, appears within; so the Grace of God, that is given to men to save from sin, appears also within.

There is not a man born into the world, if he hath lived to commit sin, but hath felt and known in himself rebukes for sin; and these rebukes are the appearances of Grace, and called in Scripture, light, and true light, for that it manifests every work of darkness; it shews us both when and wherein we have done amiss; and this it hath been in all ages.

God hath not in any age left himself without a witness in the hearts of men, to declare his righteousness, truth and faithfulness. But there is as much difference between the appearance of Grace, and the power of Grace to Salvation, the light of righteousness, and that

that fulness which enables us to lead a life of righteousness; as between a seed that is sown and the herb when 'tis come to full growth; but the one leads to the other: and it is he that attains to the fulness of Grace, that comes to lead a sober, righteous, godly life in this present world.

And as the appearances of Grace are inward, so are all its discoveries, revelations and teachings; whosoever applies himself to man for a right knowledge of the things of God, goes to a wrong School; "For," as Paul truly said, "that which may be known of God, is manifest within."

The proud, the covetous, the envious, and other ungodly persons, may for a time, and a long time, have the appearances of Grace; they may have rebukes for sin, but if by such rebukes they do not learn righteousness, they grow not in Grace, neither doth Grace grow in them; all such
hide

hide their talent, and in time, for want of improvement, come to have it quite taken from them; and being left Graceless, lead a wicked and ungodly life in this present world.

III.

If the Grace of God appears unto all, and there be a sufficiency therein to make men godly, how comes, it to pass, that there are so many ungodly?

As the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, appears unto all men; so motions of sin, that lead to destruction appear unto all men, and commonly make the first appearance. All men have evil motions and temptations in themselves to sin, before they are acquainted with any rebukes in themselves for sin, and the work of the Devil is to make forbidden things appear desirable, the world and the vanities thereof to be full of pleasantness: and as our affections come to be

be taken therewith, as we make the world our delight, and pursue after it, we depart from God; and though Grace may make many appearances, though the good Spirit of God may long strive with us, though we have in ourselves, many checks and rebukes, and thereby are made sensible that our ways and our doings displease God; yet are we prone to persevere therein; and through a continued perseverance, sin grows and comes to have dominion over us.

If Grace teacheth good men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Grace preserves good men from sin in this present world.

Nothing defaceth the image of God in man but sin, nor nothing recovers that image again but our being saved from sin.

The mortification of sin brings men to their beginning. The more humble,

ble, lowly, meek, and merciful any man is, the more he resembles his Maker; the more patient, peaceable, just, upright and faithful any man is found, the more conformable he is to the life and nature of Christ.

Saving from sin, on this side the grave, may to such as are strangers to God's salvation, seem an incredible thing; but were they as well acquainted with the power of Grace, as too many are with the strength of sin, they would say, Christ's yoke was easy.

Grace being a divine inspiration, commands the hearts of all good men, and the heart being the chief fortress of the soul commands every member of the body, holding them in with bit and bridle.

By Grace the ear of man is shut from hearkening to fables and evil reports, his eye is turned aside from gazing upon vanity, his tongue is not suffered to curse, swear, lie, or to be employed

employed in any idle communication; the hand is limited from taking bribes and from taking by violence, or otherwise, any thing that is not our own; the feet are restrained from going with the drunkard to excess, or with a lewd woman to the chamber of wantonness, or with rude persons to rioting, revelling, or any other rude exercise. And by this dominion that Grace comes to have over us, the Lord save his people from their sins.

And as we live in subjection to this power, we are servants to another prince; Sin and Satan have lost their dominion over us. And this is God's salvation; by this we come to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

VI.

We must confess (may some say) that we have known inward rebukes for sin, we have been checked, re-proved, and convicted in ourselves
after

after we have done amiss; but we have not found any thing in ourselves, when strong motions and temptations have arisen in our minds, to restrain us with bit and bridle from doing amiss; and to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in our own strength, seems too hard for any mortal; especially when any lordly sin hath got the dominion over us: what can we do in such a case?

Could man in his own strength deliver his soul from under the power of Sin and Satan, return unto God, and lead a sober, righteous, godly life in this present world, there would have been no need of a Redeemer, no occasion for a Saviour, no use of a quickening spirit to give life to our souls, no necessity of God's writing his law in our hearts, for a rule to guide our steps by, no want of a light in our souls to shew us where the Devil

Devil spreads his net, casts his bait, lays his gin, and displays his false colours; but man can no more deliver his soul from the power of Sin and Satan; without the help of the Lord, then Israel when they were in Egypt could go free from the servitude of Pharaoh without the help of the Lord; which being known to the Lord, Grace appears unto all men for their aid.

And though the appearances of Grace may seem but small aid to set our souls free from the servitude of Sin and Satan, and to conduct us in the way of life and salvation, it is not smaller than Israel's aid was, to bring them from under the servitude of Pharaoh, and conduct them to the promised land.

Israel's aid was but two aged men, the younger of them being about eighty years old, having no weapon but a rod in one of their hands; yet,
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by this small means, God being with them, they brought from under the power and servitude of Pharaoh six hundred thousand men, besides women and children; and Grace being a divine inspiration, is aid enough to bring six hundred thousand millions from under the servitude of Sin and power of Satan, did men but confide therein, and give themselves up to be guided thereby.

Inward rebukes, if we have regard thereunto, beget a fear in men, as the shaking of the rod doth in children; and as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, so it is the beginning of a reformation of our lives.

If I am checked in myself for making a lie, and have regard to that which checked me, I shall be afraid of making another; or if I find in myself rebukes for not keeping my promise, or for doing any thing amiss, and have regard to such rebukes,

I shall be afraid to do the like, lest the next rebukes be sharper ; and as this holy fear abides in us, we come to deny ungodliness, and in denying ungodliness we learn righteousness; but such as find in themselves rebukes for sin, and have no regard thereunto, are no scholars in the school of Grace.

We have read, that reproofs of instruction are the way to life, and many good men may be found at this day, who will acknowledge, that they had never come to a life of righteousness, had they not had reproofs of instruction from their own hearts, by which they came to deny unrighteousness.

For where rebukes for sin are received in love, the Lord doth not leave such souls, but follows them therewith; and the more vices we subdue, the more in the light of the Lord shall we see, and the more power

power shall we receive from God to overcome them.

If one plague will not make Pharaoh willing to let Israel go, he shall have another, and another, until he be willing; and if one rebuke will not make us willing to part with a beloved sin, we shall have another, yea, trouble and terror.

Paul knew terror before he came to find Peace with God, and peace in his own conscience; he was acquainted with judgement, before he came to obtain victory; nothing hath power to break the bonds of captivity, and set us free from the law of sin and death, but the law of the spirit of life in our own hearts.

When violent motions of sin arise, we are to stand still, and the Lord will fight for us; for as our hearts come to be possessed with Grace, if the enemy should come in as a flood;

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the Spirit of the Lord being in our inward parts, will lift up a standard against him.

The Lord's controversy is not as men vainly imagine against the sinner, but against sin; his appearances are all in love to save the sinner, and by his judgments to weaken the strength of sin; for man freed from sin, is as willing to lead a righteous life as an ungodly man can be to lead a wicked life, and more joy, he hath, though the world cannot see it.

VII.

What may truly and properly be called a sober, righteous godly life?

Devotion which consists in hearing sermons, reading good books, performing family duties, &c. hath been accounted godliness, and the practitioners thereof, righteous people.

These things are not to be discommended where they are done in sincerity, but these are not the true character
of

of righteousness and godliness.

This and much more might be found amongst the Scribes and Pharisees, yet Jesus told his disciples, that except their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they could in no wise enter into the kingdom of God.

And who are there amongst us, that are called Christians, but one day in seven will be in the exercise of something that is called godliness, though they have not learned to deny ungodliness; and such as have not learned to deny ungodliness, are far from such a righteous, godly life, as the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ teacheth all its followers.

Drunkennes, whoredom, theft, envy, hatred, bloodshed, swearing, cursing, lying, extortion, fraud, double-dealing, tale bearing, and pride, are not fruits proceeding from the good Spirit of God; but from the evil spirit
of

of this world; not issues of life, but streams that flow from a corrupt spring; these come not from the teaching of Grace in our hearts, but from evil motions that arise in our minds; these make men sinners before the Lord; and as long as we live in the practice of any of them, we shall not be righteous in his sight; those that brought forth fruits of this kind, have in all ages of the world been testified against, as unrighteous and ungodly livers. These are infirmities of the soul, that millions of money have been given to physicians to cure, but behold health hath not been by them restored. These are weeds that thousands have been hired to pluck up, but to this day have not made clean gardens, nor never will by all the art they have, for Christ is the physician of souls, none can take away the sins of the world but he alone.

Whosoever thinks to attain to a
righteous;

righteous, godly life, but by the teachings of Grace in his own heart, deceiveth his own soul.

Men may lop, or hinder the growth of many branches of iniquity, that appear outwardly; but cannot take away the cause which is within, and until the cause is removed there can be no thorough cure.

Walk in the Spirit, said Paul, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, that is the only remedy, that is the soul-healing salve; and what is this walking in the Spirit, but following the leadings of Grace in our own hearts.

For Grace as it comes to have the rule over us, brings down all exalted thoughts, abaseth pride, shuts out covetousness, gives no place unto wrath, reduceth us to a cool, quiet frame of spirit, in which frame we can bear and suffer. Grace will not suffer

suffer us to do any unjust thing, nor allow us to speak an ill word, much less to be drunk, commit whoredom, steal, or any such abominable vices, for it is the promised Spirit of Truth that leads into all truth, leads out of all error, and so brings salvation indeed.

No man can lead a righteous life, till a right spirit comes to have possession of his heart, for from the good treasures of the heart proceed all good living, for that is the guide, and this guide being of a divine nature, makes us to be heavenly minded.

Nothing exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, but the righteousness that proceeds from a right spirit in our hearts; for that is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ.

As murder, adultery, theft, which are the worst of evils, proceed out of the heart whilst the evil spirit of this world

world hath the possession thereof; so good will to all men, which is the chief of virtues, proceeds out of the heart when the good Spirit of God comes to make its abode there; but this abode is not known till by denying ungodliness and wordly lusts, the spirit of this world is denied, and thereby the heart cleansed, then and not till then can we come to know "The Lord our righteousness."

As God, in his unlimited love to mankind, "causeth his sun to shine" on the evil, and on the good, and "his rain to rain on the just and on the unjust;" so he that hath this goodwill to all, will not wrong any, oppress any, shew violence to any, nor speak evil of any; but be ready to serve all men in love and faithfulness.

And since this reformation is only and alone by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, give me leave to say with the Prophet, "Ho, every one that

that thirsteth, come ye to the water and drink." every one that hath a desire in his soul after righteousness, turn in to the Grace of God in your own hearts, which is a free gift without money and without price, nothing is required on man's part, but to hearken thereunto, and take counsel therefrom; "Hear," said the Prophet, "and your souls shall live."

Adam hearkening to evil motions died unto righteousness, and so do all ungodly men, but he that hearkens to the voice of Grace, lives unto righteousness, and from the flowings of that spring, that he hath in himself, leads a sober, righteous, godly life in this present world.

Hearing and reading at the best are but to know what we ought to do.

If ever we think to walk by Scripture rules, if ever we intend to keep our Lord's command, and if we would
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lead a righteous, godly life in this present world, we must turn in to the Grace of God in our own hearts, for that gives us power to keep to our rule.

VIII.

If inward and spiritual Grace be sufficient to teach us our duty towards God and man, and to establish us in righteousness wherefore was there an outward ministry given to the church?

In the state of degeneration all men are strangers to Grace, they know not the Lord; and the work of the ministry is to open the understandings of all such, and to turn them to this heavenly Teacher, since nothing else can enable us to lead a sober, righteous, godly life in this present world.

And as some are ordained to plant, so others were given to water, that no young plants might wither, but all come to be rooted and grounded.

We find that in the Primitive times some declined from what they had

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attained

attained to; for that they kept not with their Guide, and with such Paul was forced to travail in birth again: for as plants are not grounded as soon as they are planted, so men are not established in righteousness as soon as they are turned from unrighteousness; and such as were strong, were to watch over the weak, and lend them a helping hand in their travails, until they all came in the unity of the Spirit to be perfect men.

But who are fit to plant and water? No ungodly men, for such have not the Spirit of Jesus, such know not the way of God's salvation themselves, and so cannot direct others thereto, nor lend them a hand therein; but such as are, what Paul after his conversion was, not only a minister, but a witness of what he testified, or such as have travelled in the way of God's Salvation themselves, and are come through the teachings of Grace to
that

that strength and perfection, "As to
 " deny ungodliness and wordly lusts,
 " and to live soberly, righteously, and
 " godly in this present world."

A DESCRIPTION OF TRUE GODLINESS,

And the Way by which we may conform our Lives thereunto.

THE life and nature of Christ, all true Christians, who have the spirit of Christ, may find in themselves; and others may have some sense thereof by reading and well considering the contents of the fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew, where it is said, that “ Jesus seeing
“ the multitude, went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them;” and what he taught his disciples then, he teacheth all true Christians now: for though he ascended, the Holy Spirit that dwelt in him descended,
and

and did then, doth now, and to the end of the world will tabernacle with all the Lord's redeemed, to be their teacher; and as many as walk after this Spirit are taught of Christ, and walk in his footsteps: for as no vine beareth one kind of grape, and the branches another, so every member of Christ answereth the life of Christ in his conversation; he is humble, lowly, meek, merciful, patient, peaceable, just, upright, honest, and faithful: a Christian is not known by his words or his devotion; but by his works, his nature, his life, and his conversation.

I shall not insist on all particulars contained in the forementioned chapters, but chiefly on the five following exhortations or commands of our Lord; the least of which for a true trial of Christianity, is more to be observed than the most specious ceremonies; for the proud as well as the

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humble,

humble, the cruel as well as the merciful, the fraudulent as well as the just, the ungodly as well as the godly, can conform to the one, but cannot conform to the other.

The true trial of Christianity is to be found in the life and nature of Christ, if the Spirit of Christ hath the rule in us, these following fruits will be brought forth by us.

I. In all our communication, our yea will be yea, and our nay, nay; the word that goeth out of our lips will be sure.

He that is a Christian indeed hath no necessity in himself, nor need to be urged by others, to bind his soul with an oath to perform his word, for the law of the Spirit of Life in his own heart constrains him so to do.

Christians in their communications weigh their words before they utter them, with their capacities to perform them, knowing that a promise cannot

not be broken without violating the righteous law of God in their own hearts; and whenever such violence is done, terror enfues; and this makes good men, who live under the government of Christ, dread much more to break their words, than others do to forfeit their bonds; and this holy dread makes our yea to be yea, and our nay to be nay; this makes us cautious in our promises, and careful in our performances: the exhortation may be read in Scripture, but the binding tie must be known in our own hearts: all that have the Scripture have this rule; but unless we have a principle of life in ourselves, we cannot walk by this rule; and we must not only have such a principle, but we must also improve it by a continued practice, before it comes to be our life, our centre, and our nature; till then we we may say, " These things we " should do;" but cannot say "These things

things we do:" and so witness against ourselves, that, though we have the Scriptures, we walk not according to the Scriptures; though we have the words of Christ, we are not in the life and nature of Christ; our yea is not yea, and our nay, nay, in our communication; our words and our promises are not steadfast and sure.

Swearing, in the communication of Christians, is superfluous; for where truth rules in the heart, there cannot be falshood in the lips. Prove a professed Christian by this Rule, weigh him in this balance: if his yea, be yea, and his nay, nay, in all his communication; if he be a man of his word at all times; if his performances be one with his promises, herein he abides in the doctrine of Christ; and this is an evident demonstration that he is so far a Christian indeed. But if these performances are wanting, though he has a Christian name, he
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is not in the Christian nature; for, as I said before, what manner of grape the vine beareth, the branches thereof, if they continue in the vine bear the same.

The second exhortation or command of our Lord was this, "Resist not evil:" and this was not only his doctrine, but his Life and nature, as we may plentifully read in Scripture. Though he met with revilings, reproaches, buffetings, and cruel usage, we do not find that he was once moved thereby, much less that ever he resisted; but gave his face to the smiter, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, "he was as a sheep dumb before the shearer, he opened not his mouth:" so much as to say, "What have I done?" Why is it thus?"

Now the fruits of the Spirit, in head and members, captain and fol-

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lowers,

lowers, Christ and Christians, are one in nature; for as Christ was humble, lowly, meek, patient, peaceable, under all his sufferings, so are Christians, if Christians indeed; they render not evil for evil, they desire not an eye for an eye, nor a tooth for a tooth; revenge of any kind is far from them, but as patience and forbearance was the life and nature of Christ, so it is the life and nature of all Christians, as they grow in Grace, and come to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

And by this also, professors of Christianity may prove themselves, whether they are Christians indeed; for it is the deed that manifesteth all things, for bad men may have good words; forms may be imitated, but the patience, the meekness, and forbearance that dwelt in Christ, and may be found in all true Christians, cannot be imitated. If any vice hath got head in us, make what profession we will,

will, the fruit of that vice will be brought forth by us; we shall be proud, we shall be covetous, we shall be envious: if we are reviled, we shall be apt to revile; if we are smitten, we shall be apt to smite; if we are sued at the law causelessly, we shall be apt to sue: whilst it is so, we are in the world's nature, its spirit hath the rule over us, and not the lowly, meek, lamb-like spirit of Jesus.

The third exhortation or command of Christ was this, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you."

This also was not only the doctrine, but the life and nature of Christ, so it is the life and nature of Christians, who are thoroughly leavened with the spirit of Christ.

No man, having the spirit of Jesus, and living under the government thereof,

thereof, can hate the person of any man; for by creation we are all the workmanship of God's hands; and all true Christians know that enmity, hatred, cursing, spite, and persecution, proceed not from men or women as they are the Lord's creation, but as they have lost his image, and thereby become emptied of good, and filled with evil; for as an evil spirit comes to have the rule over us, evil fruits will be brought forth by us.

Could we but see ourselves, did we but observe our own natures, with the fruits we bring forth in our lives, we might easily judge of ourselves and others, whether we were converts or not; whether the spirit of Christ, or the spirit of this world had the rule in us, and over us; for the course of our lives, especially in times of trial, declares who are led by the meek spirit of Jesus, and who are not; who are leavened with the leaven of righteousness

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ness, and who are not; who lead a sober, upright, godly life, and who do not; for it is not our words, but our practice that manifests what spirit hath rule in us, and over us.

For until, by conversion, our natures come to be changed, we cannot love enemies; while we have enmity against them; we cannot bless them, we cannot pray for them, we shall be forward to do them hurt, but far from doing them good.

Come, professors of Christianity, lay aside your forms that you have long contended about; measure yourselves by this line, try yourselves by this touchstone; are you reduced to such a frame of spirit as to love your enemies, "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you?" This is a true character of Christianity.

This was the life and nature of
Christ

Christ: "The foxes have holes, and the
 " birds of the air have nests, but the
 " son of man had not where to lay
 his head;" yet he was content; his
 thoughts run not out on things pertain-
 ing to the body; it was meat and drink
 unto him to do his Father's will and
 to finish the work that he was sent to
 do; a work that none before him e-
 ver did, namely, the fulfilling of all
 righteousness, by doing the thing that
 was right in the whole course of his
 life, as a precedent to all his followers.

And as many as have found the
 kingdom of God and his righteous-
 ness, and are come to live under the
 rule and government of a right spirit,
 have the mind of Christ; though they
 live in the world, their thoughts run
 not out after the world, a true Chris-
 tian is diligent in his calling, moderate
 in his expence, content in his state,
 takes but little thought what he shall
 eat, or what he shall drink, or where-
 withal

withal he shall be clothed; he delights in justice, equity, truth and faithfulness, and his thoughts are exercised therein; and resting on God's providence, his honest endeavours are attended with a blessing.

Ungodly men seek the world first, I may say first and last; the riches of the world, the honour of the world, the pleasure of the world, and the praise of the world; "What they shall eat, or what they shall drink" to please their appetites, "what they shall put on" to be accounted great in the world, and to have the pre-eminence above and before their fellow-creatures; their thoughts run far more, how they shall be conformable to the fashions of the world, than how they shall be conformable to the life, nature, and doctrine of Christ.

This is the natural state of the sons and daughters of men, whilst they continue in a state of degeneracy,
aliens

aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to that covenant of promise that the Lord made with the house of Jacob. And to a better state none can come, but by seeking and finding the kingdom of God and his righteousness, or the rule and government of Christ, by his eternal spirit in their own hearts; there the seed is sown; there the leaven is laid; there the pearl of great price is found, but not without digging deep; for whilst vice is uppermost, virtue is lowermost; while sin reigns, the power of Grace suffers; the bringing down of the one is the exaltation of the other; there must be a death unto sin before there can be a new birth unto righteousness, and a growth in righteousness, before we can centre in that content, so as to take no "thought what we shall eat, " or what we shall drink, or where- " withal we shall be cloathed." And so it is every man's principal concern,

first

first, to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; first to know the rule and government of a right spirit in himself; for this qualifies him and makes him capable of leading a Christian life, and of performing Christian duties both to God and man.

The fifth and last branch of the life, nature, and doctrine of Christ, that I shall here insist upon is this. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for that is the law and the prophets;" for this is that the righteous Lord God required from his people in all ages.

This doing is accounted by many zealous professors of Christianity, in our present age, a moral righteousness, and so but a small part, or rather no part of true godliness; but rightly considered, all actual righteousness if it proceed from a right spirit, is in itself the true righteousness of faith;

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and

and that no authority, which is performed from a carnal mind, in imitation of good men's practices, but not of their life and nature: for if the tree be known by its fruits, fruit manifesteth the nature of the tree.

Moses, from an admiration of the justice and equity that the Lord requireth from the sons and daughters of men, under the administration of the law, uttered these words, "What nation is there so great, who had statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law that I set before you:" and doth the law of the spirit of life require less righteousness from Christians, than that outward law did from the Jews? I tell you nay, but rather more, for that more power is given to all true Christians to perform acts of righteousness.

Were the understandings of all who are called Christians enlightened to see themselves as they are, or had they

they but hearts to prove themselves by this Christian rule, measure themselves by this straight line, weigh themselves in this equal balance, the following sorts of men and women, with many others, would no more pass for true Christians, in God's account, than clipt and counterfeit money, when it came to the balance, would in men's account.

As first, all such who in suits of law, by perverting justice, or other subtle contrivances, possess themselves of houses, lands, or goods, that they have no right unto.

Secondly, all such who by violent robbing, or private stealing, take that which is not their own.

Thirdly, all such who detain the wages of the hireling, or grind on the necessities of the poor, by beating down the value of their labour till they cannot live thereby.

Fourthly, all such who in trade or dealing

dealing use light weights, short measure, or any other kind of deceit.

Fifthly, all such who cast their burdens on other men's shoulders, and go free themselves.

Sixthly, all such as either give or take bribes.

Seventhly, all such who take wages to serve, and are not faithful to their trust.

Eighthly, all such who make contracts and perform not the same; or engage themselves by promises, and have no regard to their word.

Ninthly, all such who by evil reports, whisperings, or backbiting, sow the seeds of strife, create prejudice, or quench charity.

None of these abide in the doctrine of Christ, none of these do as they would be done unto; tho' they bear a Christian name, they are strangers to a Christian life; they live not under Christ's government; they are
not

not swayed by a sceptre of righteousness.

To become ungodly is an easy thing; for if our backs are turned on God, we have nothing in our eye but the world and the vanities thereof, promising us such content, that little else is minded.

But the great difficulty is to become godly again; though thousands are employed therein, little shew doth appear; for in the eyes of degenerated men, there is no loveliness in that path; and therefore the great query is, By what way may the proud become humble, the wild become sober, the covetous become content, the fraudulent become just, the intemperate become moderate, the incontinent become chaste, the unfaithful become faithful; I know many will say, by hearing good ministers, reading good books, and conferring with good men. But these things have been tried, and

that for several years, by many, yet no such change hath been wrought thereby.

If advice, exhortation, or counsel, would effect this great work we need not go any farther than the heavenly sayings of Christ, in the aforesaid fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew; for if we could hear all the ministers in the world, read all the good books in the world, and confer with all the good men in the world, we could not have better advice, counsel and exhortation, than is contained in those three chapters.

By hearing good ministers, reading good books, and conferring with good men, we may be convicted, but not thoroughly converted; but as virtue hath a spring so vice hath a root that mere words will not reach. The strength of sin is the growth of that seed that the wicked one hath sown in the inward parts of the sons
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and daughters of men; and forasmuch as the cause is within, it is impossible it should be wholly removed by things without; but as the cause is within, so the cure must be within, by mortifying the body of sin, or bringing down the strength thereof.

There is no unrighteous thing done, but there is an inward motion before there is any outward action; and by that light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, if our eyes are inward, we may, during the day of our visitation, see those motions, and the way to mortify the body of sin is to deny and turn from every such motion in the rising thereof, and so to crush the cockatrice in the shell; for in their rising they are weak and powerless, and may be easily turned back. And if we do not suppress vice in the rising thereof, it will continue our lord; but by every

every such denial, we bring down that which would arise and reign in us, and over us; whether it be pride, covetousness, envy, falsehood, or any other vice whatever; for the more denials are given to vice, the fewer assaults it will make; the stronger the opposition, the weaker the attempt; as yielding gives vice ground to grow from a seed to a body, denials bring it down from a body to a seed; so that though something thereof may arise in us, it doth not reign over us; but is in subjection to the sceptre of righteousness, or rule of a right spirit.

When the axe is laid to the root of the corrupt tree, a reformation begins within; the life of righteousness stands in the mortification of sin, which is an inward work. The spirit of this world must be brought down, before the spirit of the Lord can be exalted in us.

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By this we come to have the blessing as well as the birthright; for the blessing is not to the exalted mind, but to the poor in spirit, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, who hunger and thirst, not after riches and honour, but after righteousness; and all that hunger and thirst after it, will endeavour to satisfy their souls with an increase of it.

Now a talent is not improved by lying hid in a napkin; if we would have more Grace we must exercise the measure we have attained unto; we must live in the continual practice of right things; we must keep in lowliness, meekness, temperance, patience, and other virtues; we must be just in our dealings, as well in the smallest concern, as such as are more weighty; for a small matter turns the balance; and if that small matter be wanting, things are not just, we do not even as we would be done by.

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And this just dealing as righteousness comes to reign, will be no hard thing, for as we accustom ourselves thereunto it will be uppermost; it will be as a diligent handmaid, ready to offer her service, and every act of righteousness performed in a right spirit hath its reward; which is not only an answer of peace, but joy in the Holy Ghost.

I cannot recommend myself, nor any other after we are awakened unto righteousness, to any better way for the reforming of our lives, than to turn our eye into the gift of God in ourselves; that by his candle we may see the rising of vice, and so deny it; that the contrary, which is grace and truth, may rise and reign in us; for that is our help, that is our defence.

Words, whether retained in our memories, or written in our books, are but weak instruments for this
work

work, because the old man must be put off, which is an inward work; and how is a sorry guest put off, or a man that urgeth for that we are not willing to grant, but by denying him, and turning from him?

Should we enter into reasoning with any motions of sin, it is much if we are not overcome thereby, for that is the nature of sin, not to turn back at a small denial, especially if it be a sin that hath prevailed over us before; but in turning therefrom we give it the repulse; if be not hearkened unto, it goes back.

And as the old man is put off, the new man is put on; as vice is denied, virtue is embraced: and this new man makes us new creatures; that which is created after God renews in us the image of God; and bearing that image in holiness and righteousness our conversations will declare us to be Christians indeed.

But

But if this old man with his deeds of darkness be not put off, the new man that is created after God's image in righteousness and true holiness, will not be put on; and though we have been awakened unto righteousness, we shall fall asleep again, some in one form and some in another, feeding on words without any sense of power or life; and this second sleep appears to be a dead sleep; for though we may hear much spoken against pride, covetousness, envy, &c. we are not so much as touched therewith, but continue to live in the open shew thereof.

Did the sons and daughters of men who are called Christians, make it their concern to be Christians indeed, by mortifying in themselves the spirit of this world, which is the original of all vice, they would be not only a happy, but a lovely people; for by mortifying the body of sin, oppression
would

would cease, all wrongs and injuries would determine and be at an end; love would spring both to God and man; grace would grow; humility, meekness, moderation, and all other virtues would shew themselves; they would be another manner of people in their conversations; their words and their works would be just, upright, and honest; they would confide in one another without any scruple or doubt. What is more lovely than to be at all times, and on all occasions, just, upright, honest, and faithful, doing to all men in all things whatsoever, even as we would that they should do unto us? A living under the rule and government of a right spirit, qualifies us, and makes us capable of performing every Christian duty: "We shall love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves;" which is the sum of all godliness, and the true character of Christianity.

Judge HALE's Testimony

O F T H E

Inward and visible Guidance

O F T H E

SPIRIT of GOD.

THOSE that truly fear God have secret guidance from a higher wisdom than what is barely human, namely, "the Spirit of Truth and "Wisdom," that doth really and truly, but secretly, prevent and direct them. Any man that sincerely and truly fears Almighty God, relies upon him, and calls upon for his guidance and direction, hath it as really as a son hath the counsel and direction of his father; and though the voice be not as audible, nor the direction always perceptible (or discernible) to sense

sense, yet, it is equally as real as if a man heard the voice saying, "This is the way, walk in it."

And this secret direction of Almighty God is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul, yet it may also be found in the concerns of this life, which a good man that fears God and begs his direction, shall very often if not at all times, find.

I can call my own experience to witness that, even in the external actions of my whole life, I was never disappointed of the best guidance and direction, when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored the secret direction and guidance of the divine Wisdom.

The observation of the secret admonition of the spirit of God in the heart, is an effectual means to cleanse and sanctify thy heart, and the more it is attended unto, the more it will be conversant with thy soul for thy instruction

instruction.—In the midst of thy difficulties it will be thy counsellor; in the midst of thy temptations it will be thy strength, and grace sufficient for thee; in the midst of thy troubles it will be thy light and thy comforter: only beware thou neglect not the voice of this Spirit; it may be thy neglect may quench it, and thou mayest never hear that voice more.

It is impossible for thee to enjoy that which must make thee happy, till thou art deeply sensible of thy own emptiness and nothingness and thy spirit thereby brought down and laid in the dust.—The Spirit of Christ is an humbling spirit; the more thou hast of it the more it will humble thee; and it is a sign that either thou hast it not, or that is yet over-mastered by thy corruptions, if thy heart be still haughty,

Watch, therefore, the secret persuasions and dissuasions of the Spirit
of

of God, and beware thou quench it not, nor grieve it; be sure thou observe this voice—this wind that blows where it lists, if shut out, resisted, or grieved, may haply never breathe upon thee again, but leave thee to be hardened in thy sins; but if observed and obeyed, thou shalt be sure to have it thy monitor and director upon all occasions; when thou goest out it will lead thee, when thou sleepest it will keep thee, and when thou awakest it will talk with thee.

These are faithful, weighty, and true sayings, happy are those that own witness them so to be.

*Of the Preparation of the Heart, for
the Worship of God.*

THE inspired prophet Isaiah, in the last verse of the fortieth chapter, saith, "They that wait upon
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“ the Lord shall renew their strength.”
 in the first verse of the next chapter
 immediately succeeding, he shews what
 is meant by waiting, in these words,
 “ Keep silence before me, O Islands !
 “ and let the people renew their
 “ strength ” Certainly this silence im-
 ports the same thing as waiting in the
 former verse, seeing the same effect is
 attributed to both: and is not the
 carnal mind and corrupt imagination
 here commanded to keep silence be-
 fore God, that the soul may properly
 wait, and watch unto prayer? The
 prophet adds, “ Let them come near,
 “ then let them speak.” This also
 appears to call the immortal soul in-
 to deep silence, that therein it may
 first receive divine help to draw near
 in spirit to the great Jehovah, and
 then speak forth its humble petition,
 under a sense of that holy, solemn,
 awful reverence, which is due from
 a dependant creature in its approaches
 to

to its Almighty Creator.

Solomon, under an awful sense of the Divine Greatness and Majesty, affords us this necessary caution when we present ourselves before him; “Be not rash with thy mouth:” This every one certainly is, who presumes to speak to the most high before he hath duly considered in whose presence he is. He adds, “Let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.” This plainly inculcates, how much it behoves us to have a reverent sense of the Majesty and purity of the supreme searcher of hearts, and to be deeply humbled into a feeling of our inability and nothingness, before we address him with our lips.

When the prophet Isaiah was admitted, in a vision, to behold the glorious Majesty of God, he could
only

only cry, "Woe is me!" till a live coal from the holy altar had touched his lips, and purged away his sin.—What a deep reverence of his Maker, and just abhorrence of self filled his humbled mind, when he was favoured with this awful sight of the supreme glory! How self abasing were his sensations, and emphatical his expressions, when he cried, "Woe is me!" for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips! and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts! How different is this heartfelt acknowledgement, proceeding from the powerful convictions of the Holy Spirit, to those dry, formal, unfelt words that come from the lips of bare nominal Christians! Notwithstanding every disciple hath not so large a portion of the holy Spirit, as this great prophet, had, yet every one is graciously favoured with a measure sufficient

sufficient to render his offering spiritual.

We read, that after the ascension of Christ, his disciples "were all with one accord, in one place, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost." Though the text doth not expressly say, they were waiting in silence for the promise of the Father, yet it appears as probable they were, as that they were not; for their is no mention of any vocal exercise amongst them at that time, before they were influenced thereunto by that peculiar communication and impulse of the Holy Ghost, whence "they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The attention is certainly more likely to be fixed upon, and stayed in true watchfulness towards the Lord, and the mind more fitly prepared to receive the influence of his divine light and power, in silent waiting, than if
agitated

agitated in a continual practice of running over a multitude of expressions.

Waiting upon God is abundantly recommended in holy writ, and waiting, in silence necessarily implied in order to hear his voice. "My sheep," saith the great Shepherd, hear my "voice." When is the soul so capable of hearing the quickening language of his spirit, as in a state of silent watching for, and waiting to hear what he shall give it an understanding of, and engage it in, as its requisite and reasonable duty, by the illuminating virtue and enlivening power of his holy influence.

The heavenly influence of the Holy Spirit is the very life and glory of the gospel-dispensation, and is now as surely to be distinguished by experienced minds, as it was in the primitive age; else why was it promised to abide as the guide and leader of
true

true believers; and why doth the apostle exhort “to pray always with all supplication in the spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance?”

Christ dwells in the hearts of these by faith, as the holy, powerful, appointed minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which God hath pitched, and not man. He not only teacheth infallibly and convincingly, but also raiseth a hunger and thirst after a closer union with himself, and a fuller possession and enjoyment of his everlasting righteousness. Those who have attained this experience, cannot but esteem the time well spent in silently waiting for his instruction what to pray for, and that he may open their understandings to discern their present duty, and how to apply the sacred writings to real profit, and also to commemorate what great things he has mercifully done for their needy
souls

souls, both without and within them. This frequently melts them into tears of unaffected contrition, and humble gratitude; in which state they can adore his goodness, and put up their petitions without a prayer-book, and often without a vocal sound for he is then known to be in his temple, and the earthly part is in perfect silence before him. What sober person, who considers how awful a thing it is to worship the great Jehovah in spirit and truth, can lightly censure or disapprove of such a silent dependance on his power, to help the poor creature under its manifold infirmities? "Rest in the Lord, saith David, or as in the margin, Be silent, to the Lord, and wait patiently for him: wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

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